

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Isolated pixel portions are removed from an image based upon a minimum of a
5 two-step detection process. A first step is to compare the parallel edges of a predetermined
unit area to a predetermined first threshold value so as to detect a possible line or
continuous image in the predetermined area in a first direction. A second step is to
ascertain that another line or continuous image exists in a second direction which is
perpendicular to the first direction by comparing the average pixel values from lines of
10 pixels in the second direction. Based upon the two comparison results, it is determined
whether or not an isolated portion exists in the predetermined unit area.